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National Park Service News Release

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Exploring a Continent: Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery Expedition in America's National Parks and Federal Agencies

(Washington, D.C.) --- In 1803, President Thomas Jefferson acquired the Louisiana Purchase from France, expanding the borders of the United States from the Atlantic Ocean to the Rocky Mountains. The vast areas of unexplored country offered the new nation the potential for growth and the possibility of a practical water route all the way to the Pacific Ocean. Jefferson had for years been fascinated by the unexplored territory west of the Mississippi River, and in June 1803 he announced plans to send an expedition overland to the Pacific. In 1804, Lewis & Clark, along with 45 men and a dog, began a journey that would take three years and cover territory that would later encompass 11 states. As we head into the last two years of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, what better way to learn about the Corps of Discovery Expedition than by visiting a national park or other federal agency.

The National Park Service (NPS) and several federal agencies have the honor of preserving and managing numerous areas that commemorate Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery Expedition. The history of this momentous journey is commemorated in areas as diverse as Independence National Historical Park in Pennsylvania, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park in West Virginia, Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in Missouri, Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site in North Dakota, and Lewis and Clark National Historical Park in Oregon and Washington.

“I invite everyone to explore the national parks and federal agencies that preserve and commemorate the Lewis and Clark expedition,” said Fran Mainella, Director of the National Park Service. “The journey of the Corps of Discovery’s expedition to find a route to the Pacific Ocean, their interaction with native tribes, and their scientific discoveries are important milestones in the history of the American people.”

The National Park Service has developed and made available a web site to help visitors learn about NPS and federal agency sites they can visit to gain an understanding of and walk in the footsteps of Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery Expedition. By visiting the *Exploring a Continent: Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery Expedition in America's National Parks and Federal Agencies* website at: http://www.nps.gov/pub_aff/lewis_clark/index.htm, people can learn of the many special places managed by the federal government that commemorate the Lewis and Clark expedition. In addition to a list of national parks and federal agencies, the web site includes information and web links to books and documents related to the theme of Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery, and a list of events scheduled for 2005.

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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.